

INTELLOFAX 21

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Country: USSR

Subject: Developments in Kazakhstan/Balkhash Armed Flotilla/MVD Air Patrols Against Labor Deserters in the Alma-Ata and Karaganda Oblasts/Derailment of Sugar Shipment.

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Balkhash Armed Flotilla

1. "The industrial center of Balkhash is strongly protected by its own armed flotilla. This flotilla belongs to SAROVF, the Central Asiatic River and Lake Flotilla. It has four naval bases at its disposal:

Three - Balkhash, Shimpen [not in NIS Gazetteer] and Ili Ozernoye - on the shores of Lake Balkhash;

One - Ili Rechnoye - on the upper reaches of the Ili River, some 85 km from Alma Ata.

2. "The Balkhash Flotilla includes vessels of various types. The most important are 14 new vessels built during 1950-52. These are armed with 150-mm guns and radar-controlled, anti-aircraft guns. There are also over 50 anti-aircraft patrol boats each armed with eight to 12 heavy machine guns. Many rafts, each armed with two batteries of anti-aircraft rockets, are anchored close to shore [at these bases?].
3. "These anti-aircraft rockets are said to have a very high ceiling (approximately 20 km). In March 53 rockets of this type were used in exercises in the area of the Gulf of Vostochny.

MVD Air Patrols Against Labor Deserters in the Alma-Ata and Karaganda Oblasts

4. "Since March 1953 special MVD air patrols have been organized in steppe and desert areas in the Alma-Ata and Karaganda Oblasts to search out armed bands of labor deserters.

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5. "There have been mass escapes of workers from the iron ore mining area on the Sary-Su River. They have organized themselves into armed bands, which the authorities consider dangerous. The greatest concentration of these deserters is said to be in the area of the Muiun-Kum desert in the Dzhanbul Oblast and in the middle basin of the Chu River. They were destroying railway lines and radio and telephone stations in those areas.
6. "The airfields which the MVD patrols have at their disposal include those at Ili, Alma-Ata, Balkhash, Atasuskiy and Temir Tau. Based at the airfield at Ili are several types of planes, including the YAK-7, PO-2 and YAK-15.

Derailment of Sugar Shipment

7. "A railroad shipment of sugar was derailed and partially destroyed at the station of Chu between Alma-Ata and Lugovoy on 6 March 1953. It is the general consensus locally that the accident was caused deliberately in an attempt to steal the sugar. Seven cars were derailed and a lot of sugar looted before a rescue train arrived."

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